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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/990,498	11/21/2001	Yue Ma	.9432-000145	3411

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EXAMINER

LIU, MING HUN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2697

DATE MAILED: 08/13/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/990,498

Applicant(s)

MA ET AL.

Examiner

Ming-Hun Liu

Art Unit

2697

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2 and 3.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-8 and 11-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of the applicant's admitted prior art and US patent 6,597,808 to Guo et al.

In reference to claim 1, the applicant discloses as prior art an apparatus comprising a reusable panel for temporary display of user-drawn marks (figure 1), a digitizer for generating digital information corresponding to the user drawn marks (page 2, lines 13-14). As the applicant explains, previous inventions lack an indexing and storing method with the written data. Guo describes an indexer for, associating the digital information with a header, wherein the header is based at least in part on a selected portion of the user-drawn marks selected by the user (column 3, lines 25-30). Guo's invention could have been easily been incorporated to the whiteboard digitizer. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to use Guo's invention with the whiteboard apparatus familiar to the art to provide a more efficient method of recording and retrieving information.

In reference to claim 2, it is described on page 1, paragraph 3 (lines 2-3) of the specifications that the reusable panel corresponds to a whiteboard panel for use with temporary markers dispensing erasable ink is a device that is common to the art.

In reference to claim 3, it is described on page 1, paragraph 3 (line 4) of the specifications that the digitizer corresponds to a scanner for scanning whiteboard notes from the whiteboard panel.

In reference to claim 4, Guo clearly states in his disclosure that the selected portion of the user-drawn marks corresponds to a circled region of the whiteboard notes.

In reference to claim 5, Guo discloses an indexer that uses an indexing method, the method comprising, extracting a circled region of the whiteboard notes using circled region extraction, constructing a header based at least in part on the circled region; and associating the digital information as data with the header as metadata (column 3, lines 25-30).

In reference to claim 6, wherein the user-drawn marks contain plural circled regions (figure 1, items 20 and 22 of Guo), wherein every circled region is extracted, wherein headers are constructed for each circled region, and wherein the digital information is associated as data with each header as metadata (column 3, lines 25-30 of Guo).

In reference to claim 7, the references do not explicitly state that the indexing method comprises the step of removing a circle from the circled region. This functionality or removing the circling lines is a feature that is extremely common if not obvious to the art. It would have been obvious to one skilled to implement the removal of the circle after the indexing step so to show the user that the circled material has indeed been indexed. Removing the circle also reduces the amount of memory required to store unimportant pixel information from the circle.

In reference to claim 8, Guo describes on column 2, lines 57-61, an indexing method that further comprises the step of constructing recognized text using handwriting recognition on the circled region from which the circle.

In reference to claim 11, Guo discloses on column 3, lines 20-35 that computers provide a memory depository of a plurality of headers where the associated digital information that is digital information associated with a header is concurrently displayed on an active display with the header upon selection of the header by a user.

In reference claim 12, the limitation is inherent to the claimed invention. The plotting machine is inherently capable of redisplaying machine-drawn mark where the machine drawn marks resemble the user-drawn marks from which the associated digital information was generated.

In reference to claims 13 and 14, the limitation described in the claim is an elementary graphical detect and delete algorithm that is obvious to anyone skilled to the graphical arts. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to implement such an algorithm because of its simplicity and ease of implementation.

Claim 15 are rejected because they list obvious if not inherent limitations to the simple algorithm presented in claims 13 and 14. One skilled in the art would understand that such limitations are weaknesses in using a detection and deletion algorithm such as the one proposed.

Claim 16 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 5.

Claim 17 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 6.

Claim 18 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 7.

Claim 19 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 8.

Claim 20 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 5.

Claim 21 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claims 5 and 11.

Claim 22 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claims 1, 2, 9 and 10.

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Claims 23 and 24 are rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 13 and 14.

Claim 25 is rejected on the same grounds as the rejection of claim 15.

3. Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of the applicant's admitted prior art and Guo et al in view of US Patent 6,457,792 to Saund et al.

As discussed in the specifications of the application (page 8, lines 4-5) it is common in the art to have a redisplay capability permitting redisplay of the user-drawn marks. Furthermore as demonstrated by Saund and numerous other well-known inventions, it is common in the art to attach plotters that are capable of replicating user-drawn marks directly operably coupled onto the reusable panel. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to incorporate such a plotting device because of its extreme conventionality and convince it provides for the reproduction of saved whiteboard markings.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

US Patent 4,600,083 to Parent et al: Positioning and plotting system.

US Patent 4,583,292 to Langberg: Plotting system

US Patent 6,404,936 to Katayama et al: Image extraction method

US Patent 5,212,740 to Paek et al: Edge detection method

US Patent 6,351,559 to Zhou et al: Enclosure definition detection method.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ming-Hun Liu whose telephone number is 703-305-8488. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Mancuso can be reached on 703-305-3885. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9314 for regular communications and 703-872-9314 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-4750.

Ming-Hun Liu
August 11, 2003



JOSEPH MANCUSO
PRIMARY EXAMINER